Yard. The requisite trained and competent manpower for management and operation of Buffer Yard was not available with the port trust in 1997.

(c) No, Sir. In fact, revenue of Rs. 3.82 crores by way of royalty in addition to lease rental of Rs. 3.13 crores was generated during the period from August 1997 to March 2001 by investing Rs. 4.06 crores only. Besides, the port achieved operational convenience and decongestion.

(d) Does not arise.

Purchase of Gantry Crane

3585. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of SHIPPING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Cochin Port Trust decided in 1997 to purchase a Gantry Crane for Rs. 7.00 crore to augment yard handling facility;

(b) if so, when during the tenders were being processed in 1998 the Port Trust reversed the purchase decision made earlier and opted to hire a crane on lease from a Mumbai firm for a period of ten years;

(c) whether in a net present value analysis conducted later it was established that the leasing option was imprudent resulting in a loss of Rs. 7.45 crore; and

(d) if so, the action taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The port hired crane on lease mainly due to the following reasons:

(i) The Port did not have sufficient surplus funds for the outright purchase of the equipment.

(ii) The lessor assured 88 per cent availability per year throughout for the entire lease period of the crane. This was substantially higher when compared to the availability of the ports own similar cranes procured earlier.

(iii) All the costs relating to the annual maintenance of the crane was to be borne by the lessor.

(iv) The crane was to be transferred to CoPT free of cost after 10 years, at the end of the lease period.

(c) and (d) In view of observations made by audit that outright purchase option was cheaper, the matter is under examination.